



The Sustainable Pioneer

http://www.nrel.gov/sustainable_nrel/

November/ December 2003

DRCOG Announces New Program

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) is not sponsoring the Rush Hour Relief Program this year. They have replaced this campaign with a new Program, Carpool Plus. This is an on-line carpool matching service that provides a quick and easy way to find a carpool partner who lives and works near you.

There are numerous advantages to carpooling. High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes can be accessed to cut driving time, the cost of gas is shared, and most importantly, it keeps the air cleaner and roads less crowded.

For a limited time, Carpool Plus is offering The Guaranteed Ride Home®. This benefit ensures that people who get to work by carpooling are never stranded at the office if an emergency arises. As soon as you register with Carpool Plus, you're covered. If you or a member of your family falls ill, or if you're stuck with an unexpected schedule change such as a late meeting, Guaranteed Ride Home® is there for you. This benefit is offered through December 31, 2003. Details and limitations are explained on the website.



To learn more about this free service, go to www.carpoolplus.com. You can register, find matches and get your carpool rolling.

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Biodiesel: Fueling the Future

Biodiesel is a fuel manufactured from biobased oils, fats, and recycled cooking greases. The most common conversion process is called transesterification. B20, a blend of 20% biodiesel and 80% diesel fuel, can be used in all compression-ignition (CI) engines that were designed to be operated on diesel fuel, such as diesel-powered cars, trucks, tractors, boats, shipping equipment, irrigation systems, mining equipment, and electrical generators. The B20 blend provides a cleaner smelling fuel with a higher cetane rating, superior lubricity, less toxic emissions, significant emission reductions, similar fuel consumption, horsepower and torque.

Biodiesel fuel yields 220% more energy than is required to produce it, including all the energy used in the agriculture, transportation and distribution. This occurs because the feedstock crop collects solar energy and transforms it into the biodiesel feedstock oil. Biodiesel also recycles CO₂, a greenhouse gas thought to contribute to global warming. The CO₂ that goes out the tail pipe becomes next year's oilseed crop.

NREL's Center for Transportation Technologies and Systems is considering biodiesel as a viable fuel for the future. Research is currently underway to examine the fuel's quality, stability and reliability. They are also working to maximize the environmental benefits of the fuel such as the further reduction of Nox emissions.

Learn more about this exciting fuel alternative at

<http://www.biodiesel.org>

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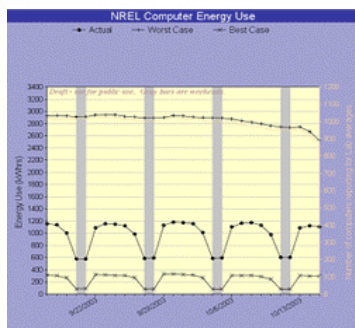
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Soybean oil is currently the leading source of virgin vegetable oil used for biodiesel feedstock in the United States.

Sustainable Watch



NREL recently implemented a computer power management program. Tom Ferguson has designed a web page that allows each NREL employee to monitor his/her computer energy use. Simply go to the "PERFORMANCE DATA" tab on theSource. The site gives the option to view "Average Hours On" or "Average Energy Use". Type in your user name and the table shows daily computer activity. You can make a difference by turning computers/monitors off at night and on the weekends or utilize your computer's power management settings. This is a great way to show that every NREL employee plays a vital role in promoting a Sustainable workplace.

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Q & A Forum

Q. I suggest that more shade trees be planted around the SERF parking lot. These trees would provide shade for cars, as well as during events frequently held in the SERF parking lot. It seems that the variety of trees planted years ago in the SERF parking lot is doing quite well - even in drought conditions. I expect that more trees of the same variety would fare quite well with little care. The trees also will enhance the appearance of our site



A. We have received several good suggestions regarding landscaping. Funding for such landscaping improvements would be part of the Site Operations' budget. Sustainable NREL is working with Site Operations to explore the availability of FY04 funding or alternatively proposing such for FY05. We will keep you apprised of progress. We also suggest that you make your ideas heard in the upcoming staff survey - this will reinforce the growing interest in this area.

Quick Tip:

Remember to turn off bathroom and kitchen fans. Keeping them on for long periods will literally drain your home of warm air, and cost you a pretty penny.

KUDOS

Karri Bottom is the recipient for this month's Kudos. Karri is the Site Operation's representative for recycling issues as they pertain to the lab and she is an active member of the Recycling Advisory Committee. Karri has assisted with projects such as new signage at the recycling centers and recycle bins in conference rooms. In addition to her work with the Recycling Committee, she manages and operates the Energy Management Control Systems program for NREL owned buildings. Thanks, Karri, for making our lab a more sustainable one!

If you would like to recognize an NREL employee for their work in sustainability, simply forward information about him/her to susan_huffnagle@nrel.gov

For more information, visit the Web site at http://www.nrel.gov/sustainable_nrel/